Topic/ Tentative Title

"Exploring the Quest of the Hero in Selected Works of Orhan Pamuk"

Introduction

Orhan Pamuk is a contemporary Turkish writer who was awarded Nobel Prize in literature in 2006. Pamuk locates his text in the city of Istanbul which forms a landscape for his novels. Istanbul is the largest city of Turkey. It is this city which not only geographically but also culturally, bridges Asia and Europe. It is the world's only city which extends into more than one continent. It was the capital of the Ottoman Empire and was famous by the name Constantinople. Istanbul formerly Byzantium or Constantinople was capital of both the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman's ruled Turkey for six centuries from 1281 to 1924. It was no doubts one of the richest dynasties of the world but also a patriarchal one. Its rich past, culture and heritage promised it a bright future but it was relegated to the margins and Ankara was made the capital of Turkey. Nonetheless the city continues to attract tourists, painters and artists alike.

The novels of Pamuk are dense in content and function as a "bridge between East and West". Pamuk speaks to his contemporary readers by placing historical truth and present scenario in a paradoxical manner. His works focus on the metaphysical binaries of a post-modern text including dichotomy of self/other and East/West tension and its effects on an individual and city (Istanbul) at large. Edward Said's theory of Orientalism represents this confrontation and discourse of the 'Orient'. Pamuk's search of identity can be very well explained in these terms. The non- European cultures have always been discursively represented in literature and history

as binary opposites. Pamuk in his works essentially talks about a confusion or loss of identity of the protagonists that result from the East/West clash. This identity crisis and chaos becomes highly disturbing for the protagonists and thus they find themselves in a dilemma. The heroes as individual find themselves in a dilemma and can't decide whether to hold on the Turkish self or embrace the modern western tradition. They mourn the lost identity of a nation and individual self.

The theme of quest has always been there in literature from *The Odyssey* to the legends of *King Arthur and the Knights of The Round Table* to modern-day fairy tales as the fantasy books of J. R. R. Tolkien, the central action of all quest stories is the peril-filled journey the heroes must undertake to reach their goals. The plots are complex and the characters are realistic. The natures of the quest of the protagonists keep varying from novel to novel. It ranges from love to murder to mystery to scholarly and other quest. The writing style of Pamuk is unique; it's difficult and the Creative Arts (literature and painting) make an important space in his works.

The research attempts to study the heroes on quest in specific novels and the varying nature of their quest. The protagonists are seized by a frenzy to capture and preserve their dreamscape. It works as a call for them and thus a major turning point in their lives making them undertake this journey.

The role of woman on this quest journey in Pamuk's works cannot be undermined. The lady protagonists are depicted as an allusive woman who probably becomes the call for the hero to undertake the quest in his works. The struggle for woman in Eastern or Islamic countries than West has always been more difficult. Turkey has also been one of the Islamic countries in which

women's role and place has been inferior to men especially in the Ottoman era. The condition of woman here can be compared to the woman of Victorian society in England.

The selected works of study by Pamuk shall be: *The White Castle, My Name is Red, The Black Book, The New Life, The Museum of Innocence* and *The Red Haired Woman.*

Definition of Terms

Quest: Quest in literature is based on a **journey**, a road of trials in which a hero hears a **call** and leaves his home—alone or in the company of others—to search out a treasure. Along the way he undergoes trials, receives aid, fights enemies and may even die, and, if he succeeds in attaining the treasure sought, may change who and what he is.

The Call: It refers to something such as a speech, piece of writing, or act that encourages people to take action about a problem**.** Anyone-any animated thing-can undertake a quest. They must have certain qualities: insight, courage, endurance. These qualities must be inherent in questors. These heroes need insight to see the limitations of their lives, especially when the rest of their world regards those lives as enviable.

Orientalism: Orientalism is a style of thinking, a form of representation that created opinions, ideas and images of the non-European culture in racialized ways so that (i) the East was always contrasted negatively with Europe and (ii) it justified the colonial presence in the East.

Postmodern literature: It is a form of literature which is marked, both stylistically and ideologically, by a reliance on such literary conventions as fragmentation, paradox, unreliable narrators, often unrealistic and downright impossible plots, games, parody, paranoia, dark humor and authorial self-reference. Postmodern authors tend to reject outright meanings in their novels,

stories and poems, and, instead, highlight and celebrate the possibility of multiple meanings, or a complete lack of meaning, within a single literary work.

Review of Literature

M. Afridi and Buyze's *Global Perspectives on Orhan Pamuk: Existentialism and Politics Global Perspectives* on Orhan Pamuk is an interdisciplinary collection of essays that explores Pamuk's multifaceted approach to ordinary Turkish life. The contributors of this volume come from an array of international perspectives that place the reading of Pamuk into dynamic arenas of new interpretation and reflection. The themes of existentialism and politics are examined in illuminating essays through connections to nationalism, religion/secularity, traditional/modern, exile/home, and comparative readings of writers as Mohsin Hamid, Naguib Mahfouz, Italo Svevo, and Amitav Ghosh. This is an indispensable collection for understanding Pamuk, global literature, and crucial issues in today's world.

J.A Parla in *A Degraded Quest in Transcendental Homelessness: A Lukácsian Reading of Orhan Pamuk's The Black Book and The New Life is a* dissertation where in attempts are made to link some aspects of Orhan Pamuk's work with the classical novel by relying on Lukács's theory of the classical novel. However postmodern they look, both *The Black Book* and *The New Life* have deeper associations with the foundations of the novel form. In this thesis, the nature of the quest motif has been analyzed in classical and modernist paradigms, utilizing the concepts of melancholy, nostalgia and individuation. The quest in both novels typifies a degraded quest of a problematic hero in transcendental homelessness as in Lukácsian literary theory. It investigates the state of the protagonists who are equally trapped between the mundane and the transcendental in the wasteland of the God-forsaken modern world. The aim is to study

how the novels present a significant criticism about the possibility of emancipation and individual salvation as well as the chances of a meaningful search in any modern odyssey.

Jale Parla in dissertaion *How Things Speak in Orhan Pamuk's The New Life* seeks to examine how things, as significant components of Orhan Pamuk's *The New Life*, may contribute to our understanding of some sublime questions about life and art that may appear in our minds in the act of reading. Pamuk's use of detailed descriptions of objects in his novels enables the readers to visualize the scenes and hold some clues to the socio-cultural and economic frame the characters belong to. This thesis, however, aims to find out what other implications objects provide in Orhan Pamuk's *The New Life*. By following the traces of recurrently used objects in the novel, the thesis attempts to discuss two basic points: Firstly, to what extent the protagonist of the novel can reach the new life he is searching for will be questioned and secondly, how he fails to retain his advance in escape from mediocrity will be revealed. The thesis also aims at solving the mystery of the relationship between the protagonist and his belongings since this relationship is of great importance to be able to empathize with the protagonist.

S.P Anuja and K.Pramila's "Reinventing the Doctrine of Self in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* & *The New Life"* is a dissertation which attempts to study the journey of the cultural capital Istanbul and its protagonists longing to attain their desired self. Orhan Pamuk who gave a new identity to Turkish Literature has triggered the ignition for avant garde writing in Turkish main stream fiction. The protagonist Galip in *The Black Book* and Osman in *The New Life* discover their identity in their doppelganger. Galip a Lawyer goes in search of his cousin Celal and his wife Ruya takes on the identity of Celal and becomes a star Columnist. Osman goes in search of Mehemet who eventually takes on the identity of Mehemet and becomes a member in Mehemet's family. During the search they confront lot of revelations and their real self who

makes them identify themselves with their doppelganger. Both the protagonist learns the doctrine behind their identity, for Galip while reading the columns of Celal and for Osman the journey through the streets of Istanbul. It is the zeal to attain selfdom which assuages Galip and Osman to reinvent the doctrine of self in their doppelganger Celal and Mehemet. The identity of the protagonists, Galip and Osman are dealt in the similitude of Istanbul's identity. It is the journey of the cultural capital Istanbul and its protagonists longing to attain their desired self.

Relevance of study

The relevance of studying Orhan Pamuk's works is multifaceted. His works gives a great insight into the life of a 'modern hero' who is lost and alienated. He is divided in the binaries of East and West (Orientalism). This phenomenon holds true for the 'globalized world citizens' who try to imitate the West in his novels but still feels attached to his roots. The depiction of religion and society in the works of Orhan Pamuk help us understand their significance in the present context. The significance and influence of the city in shaping the character of an individual also holds contemporary relevance. The complexity of human mind is explored deeply in the novels of Orhan Pamuk. It helps us understand 'ourselves better'.

Research Problem

The research attempts to understand the problematic nature of **Quest** in selected works of Orhan Pamuk. Quest in literature is based on a journey, a road of trials in which a hero hears a call and leaves his home—alone or in the company of others—to search out a treasure. Along the way he undergoes trials, receives aid, fights enemies and may even die, and, if he succeeds in attaining the treasure sought, may change who and what he is. The research will endeavor to study the varying **nature of quest**. The aim will also be to comprehend **the call,** working as a

catalyst, and journey sought to get the quest fetched. Pamuk's characters appear to be fetish hence the role of chain of objects acting as aids in their life along the journey will be analyzed. At the same time, the study analyzes the after effects of the journey sought by the hero and whether he changes or not during the course of action from the beginning till the end. The research, therefore, seeks to test the nature of quest of heroes in contemporary sense going nomadic in Pamuk's works.

This study also helps us understand the oscillation of the East and the West and its effect on an individual and the nation as a whole. His novels open up new literary genres and the research attempts to study them for better understanding of the theme in question.

The research will make an effort to study the writing style. Jacque Derrida's literary theory of Deconstruction (Sign, Signifier and Signified) etc. shall be put to use to comprehend the writing techniques and effects of Modernism, Structuralism, Deconstruction, Post Structuralism, Post Modernism and Post Colonialism in Orhan Pamuk's works.

Objective

The objective of the study is to explore the quest of protagonist in the selected works of Orhan Pamuk. The nature of the quest of the protagonists shall be studied in detail. The nature of quest can be broadly categorized under scholarly, artistic and love .The study will also take into consideration the sociopolitical backdrop of the city. Most of his novels are situated in Istanbul which plays a significant role in his works. The metaphysical binaries of East/West clash (Edward Said's-Orientalism) and Self/Other will be put to use for better understanding of the themes and characters in the novels. The attempt will be made to understand the continuous deferral of meaning in his works.

The role of woman will be analyzed in his works playing the role of an allusive woman and thereby acting as a call for the hero to undertake the quest.

Methodology

The study shall be **Qualitative** in nature and would intend to interpret the selected primary sources. The primary sources are supported with the study of relevant secondary sources. The Primary sources used are: *The White Castle, My Name is Red, The Black Book, The New Life, The Museum of Innocence* and *The Red Haired Woman.* The secondary sources used are in the form of articles, dissertations and anthologies.

The study would closely examine history of Istanbul which has inspired the present characters in the novel. The structure of society and religion will be studied to create a better understanding of the quest of the protagonists. Subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviors of the characters shall be studied by psychological, moral and socio-political mirror portrayed as in novels and comprehended by content analysis.

The role of alluring and allusive woman in Pamuk's works shall be analysed. The research shall attempt to study the nature of woman acting as a call for the hero to undertake quest.

The research shall attempt to understand the writing style by using Theory of Orientalism by Edward Said (East/West divide) and Jacque Derrida's theory of Deconstruction. Signifiers are always deferring and differing their meaning to other words, similarly the characters in the novel keep deriving meaning from one object/person to the other and the chain continues. A meditation on these lines is at constant play in Orhan Pamuk's works. Hence, the research would

incorporate the binaries of East/West and Self/ Other wherever required to comprehend the nature of quest of the protagonists.

Plan of Work (Tentative Chapterisation)

Chapter 1 - Introduction:

This chapter will be an introduction to Orhan Pamuk's writings in English and an analysis of the way in which he represents contemporary societies of Turkey. He discusses the impact of the west on the culture of Turkey. The metaphysical binaries of a post-modern text including dichotomy of self/other and East/West tension and its effects on an individual and city at large will be discussed. Edward Said's Thoery of Orientalism shall be studied to understand the themes and characters in a better way. It will explore the Quest motif and the process of the transformation during the course of action. It would explore the nature of quest in contemporary sense making the study relevant to the readers.

Chapter 2 – The Artistic Quest in *The White Castle* and *My Name is Red*

This chapter will study the artistic quest of protagonists in above mentioned works. It will throw light on the metaphysical binaries of self/other and East/West tension (Orientalism) and its effects on an individual and city at large. *The White Castle* deals with the Artistic or scholarly quest of a young Italian scholar and Hoja- a man who is his exact double. Similarly, in *My Name is Red* the best artists of the day are commissioned by Sultan to write a great book but professional rivalry and religious terror acts as a call for the heroes to onset their Artistic quest. The role of women in the above mentioned works shall be analysed in heroes' lives which somewhere inspires them to attain artistic perfection and undertake the quest. It will attempt to study their transformation over the course of action.

Chapter 3 – The Mysterious Quest in *The Black Book* and *The New Life*

In this chapter, the focus will be on the quest of heroes' unusual journey or romantic but sad Odyssey. In *The New Life,* a mysterious and dangerous book promises the protagonist a new life for which he abandons his studies, turns his back on home and family, falls in love, and embarks on restless bus rides in pursuit of an elusive vision. Both the book offers a study of nature of quest of heroes' on a fantastic odyssey full of intellectual thriller and high romance. Similarly, Galip of *The Black Book* takes on a journey to look for his wife but the nature of mystery keeps changing. The research attempts to study women characters of Galip's wife and Osman's love Janan who play an important role in this quest and the transformation of the two heroes' during the course of their journey.

Chapter 4 – The Love Quest in *The Museum of Innocence* and *The Red Haired Woman*

The chapter studies the transformed conventions of romance and love into an intellectual adventure. These works of fiction, examines the nature of romantic attachment and the mysterious allure of collecting as it traces a wealthy man's lifetime obsession with the lower-class woman he had loved and abandoned as a young man. It creates a world in which trivial objects, a fleeting romance, and obsession for person and objects wreak havoc on the protagonists' life and his sense of understanding of everything. The role of woman in the two family and romance tales oscillating between east and west, tradition and modernity shall be attempted to study.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion: Re-defining Quest through Orhan Pamuk's writings

The final chapter will sum up the nature of quest of the protaganiosts' in the selected works of Orhan Pamuk with the help of recurrence of certain characters (the hero, the trickster,

and the wise old man) and motifs (the quest, the journey, and certain symbols). The eventual emphasis will be on the novelist's moving away from nostalgia via a feeling of alienation towards a sense of discovery, as reflected in his stories.

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